

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release July 3, 1978

Levitt 202/343-5634

TEN MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES PROPOSED FOR ENDANGERED OR THREATENED STATUS

Two species of moths and eight species of butterflies whose habitats have been modified by housing developments, urbanization, land clearing, agriculture, grazing, or the absence of fires have been proposed for endangered or threatened status, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced today.

"Endangered" means that a species is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range. "Threatened," a less dire status, means that a species is likely to become endangered within the foreseeable future.

The proposal, published in the July 3, 1978, Federal Register, lists three species as endangered and seven species as threatened. It also proposes critical habitat for eight of the species. Interested persons have until September 1, 1978, to comment on this rulemaking.

The species are all dependent upon highly specific kinds of habitat for their survival. And man is changing those habitats to meet his needs.

For example, several species of butterflies depend upon lupine plants to provide seeds for their food. The seeds germinate after fires. When natural fires are prevented or quickly extinguished lupines are crowded out by brush.

Another example: The Dakota skipper butterfly is found in virgin prairieland. This species had originally occurred from southern Manitoba south through North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois. Populations have been eliminated from Manitoba and Illinois, and the butterfly's occurrence in the remainder of its range is reduced. Conversion of virgin prairie to alternate human-related land uses is proceeding rapidly and includes agriculture, urbanization, quarry operations, highway construction, weed control operations, and inundation from dam construction.

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The blue-black silverspot butterfly originally occurred in the Rio Grande Valley in southern Conejos County, Colorado, southward into New Mexico. The only known surviving colony is now reported near Tsaile Creek, Apache County, Arizona. Man's growing need for water is altering the habitat needed for this species' continued existence. Human-related activities that have affected this species are farming and irrigation, construction of roads, haying, and grazing.

The Kern primrose sphinx moth was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered in 1975 in Walker Basin, California, an area between Greenhorn and Piute Mountains. The colony occupies an area of about 4,000 square yards, most of which is in a cultivated barley field on a cattle ranch. The present management of the barley field does not seem to be a threat to the species or its larval food plant, a primrose. If the management of the field is changed, the primrose, and thus this species, may be affected. Since this species is so limited, overcollecting may also be a threat.

The species included in this proposal and the States in which they occur are:

San Francisco tree lupine moth --(threatened, critical habitat proposed) California.

Kern primrose sphinx moth--(threatened) California.

Dakota skipper butterfly--(threatened, critical habitat proposed) Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

Pawnee montane skipper butterfly--(endangered, critical habitat proposed) Colorado.

Callippe silverspot butterfly--(endangered, critical habitat proposed) California.

Great Basin silverspot butterfly--(threatened, critical habitat proposed) Colorado and Utah.

Blue-black silverspot butterfly--(threatened, critical habitat proposed) Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico.

Oregon silverspot butterfly--(threatened, critical habitat proposed) Oregon.

Karner blue butterfly--(threatened, critical habitat proposed) Illinois, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

Palos Verdes blue butterfly--(endangered) California.

All comments on this proposal should be addressed to the Director (FWS/OES), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

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